

# Learning Processes in a Canadian Exchange Program for Multicultural, Anti-Racist Education<sup>1</sup>

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In this article we report qualitative and quantitative analyses of 120 high school students' learning processes during exchange programs emphasizing multicultural, anti-racist education in various Canadian cities. We found five topics of learning and six learning processes common to these exchanges; determined that students perceived significant changes to have occurred in reference to their personal, psychological knowledge and skills (but not their capacities to act in local societal contexts); and documented certain effects parents and teachers indirectly associated with this program perceived to have appeared after the program was completed. Our findings suggest the value of schools continuing similar exchanges across Canada as well as developing locally based policies and programs for multicultural education and long-term, grounded approaches to evaluating these innovations.

Dans cet article, les auteurs font état d'analyses qualitatives et quantitatives ayant trait aux processus d'apprentissage de 120 élèves du secondaire qui ont participé, dans diverses villes canadiennes, à des programmes d'échange privilégiant un enseignement multiculturel et antiraciste. Après avoir identifié cinq sujets d'apprentissage et six processus d'apprentissage communs à ces programmes d'échange, les auteurs ont établi que les élèves ont noté chez eux des changements importants dans leurs connaissances et compétences personnelles et psychologiques (mais non dans leur aptitude à agir au sein de leur milieu). Les auteurs ont en outre décrit certains effets que les parents et les enseignants ont associés indirectement à ces programmes bien qu'ils ne se soient manifestés qu'une fois les programmes terminés. Les conclusions des auteurs donnent à penser que les écoles ont tout intérêt à continuer de favoriser de tels programmes d'échange à travers le pays et à mettre au point des politiques et des programmes locaux en matière d'enseignement multiculturel ainsi que des approches concrètes à long terme en vue d'évaluer ces nouvelles initiatives.

Many schools and school boards in Canada are now adopting policies to foster multicultural awareness and anti-racist action—adapting their curricula to suit the increasing ethnic diversity in their student populations and local communities,

formulating regulations to counter discrimination and inequities, and promoting the capacities of students and school staff to appreciate and interact with other cultures in Canada. But little research has described systematically what these educational innovations actually do and accomplish. At a minimum, evaluation research must document the qualities of learning such educational programs foster as well as determine if students achieve the aims these programs promote. Our article addresses this need in reference to a three-year study of a pilot program involving adolescent students and their teachers from 12 school boards in different regions of Canada who took part in two-week exchanges aiming to develop multicultural awareness, anti-racist attitudes and school policies, understanding of other regions of Canada, and student leadership in these areas.

In Canada and elsewhere, multicultural education has often appeared as a diffuse desire or a goal dependent on local initiatives and circumstances rather than an established, uniform curriculum practice. Reviews of research, school policies, and educational resources have consistently found a lack of conceptual coherence—referring, for example, in Canada, to the “confused state of the field” (Martin, 1993, p. 9), the “largely atheoretical” character of such activities in schools (Mallea, 1987, p. 44), or the “disembodiment” of the concept of multiculturalism from school curricula (Edwards, 1992, p. 30)—concluding that few common definitions or principles of multicultural education currently exist: “The only common meaning is that it refers to changes in education that are supposed to benefit people of color” (Sleeter & Grant, 1987, p. 436). As one comprehensive review of Canadian publications recently concluded, “we do not yet have coherent models of Multicultural Education theory and practice that will provide significant guidance either to researchers or practitioners in the field” (Gamlin, Berndorff, Mitsopoulos, & Demetriou, 1992, p. 52). Or, as analysts of comparable situations in Britain and the United States have explained, multicultural education tends to have “started off as a highly practical activity and come to be theorised about only at a later stage” (Vyas, 1992, p. 267) while simultaneously confronting “misconceptions” that have led some educators “to resist multicultural education for fear that it will cause racial tensions and compromise educational standards” (Gay, 1992, p. 44).

In recent years, however, scholarship and school policies have moved from debates over definitions of multicultural education toward actions and analyses demonstrating how “multicultural education can and should be implemented” (Gay, 1992, p. 48). In Canada, several programs of multicultural education have been implemented in schools, then evaluated locally at these sites (Choldin, 1989; Clarke, 1982; Fisher & Echols, 1989; Ijaz, 1980; Jack, 1989; McAndrew & Gress-Azzam, 1987; McPhie, 1989; Megalokonomos, 1984; Melenchuk, 1989; Rose, 1989; Ungerleider, Krawczyk, & Court, 1990; Ziegler, 1980). Numerous theoretical analyses, some of Canadian educational settings, have also been published (e.g., Berry, Kalin, & Taylor, 1977; Kehoe, 1985; Mallea, 1989; McLeod, 1987, 1992) as have guidelines for practices in Canadian schools (e.g.,

Kehoe & Hébert, 1984; Ontario Ministry of Education, 1992; Sealey, 1985; Ziegler, 1981). Moreover, the federal government has formulated specific policy and introduced legislation—the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988 (see Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1990)—and several provinces have also adapted their human rights codes.

Distinct developments have occurred in Ontario, where multicultural education has widely been reformulated as “anti-racist education” in response to dramatic demographic changes in urban and suburban school populations, analyses exposing institutionalized discrimination against visible minorities, and much-publicized, violent incidents in schools and urban areas (Cummins, 1988; Lewis, 1992; McLeod, 1992). In 1993, Ontario’s *Education Act* was amended to require all school boards to develop and have operating policies of “antiracism and ethnocultural equity,” along with appropriate evaluation systems, by the end of the year (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1993). Such developments were already under way, as McLeod (1992, p. 225) reported, citing 40 out of 125 school boards in Ontario having explicit policies for multicultural education as of 1991. Education policies in other provinces have been less proactive but have tended nonetheless to endorse principles of equity, multicultural awareness, and cross-cultural understanding (e.g., d’Anglejan & De Koninck, 1992; McLeod, 1987; Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, 1985).

Approaches to evaluating these policy changes are only now beginning to appear—for example, specific evaluation approaches and frameworks suited to educational contexts in Britain (Tomlinson, 1990) and the United States (Banks, 1993; Borman, Timm, El-Amin, & Winston, 1992; Gay, 1992; Grant & Millar, 1992; Price, 1992). Correspondingly, there have appeared detailed accounts of classroom processes for multicultural education in certain educational settings in the United States (e.g., Tatum, 1992; Weigel, Wiser, & Cook, 1975). But many fundamental aspects of multicultural education in Canada remain unaddressed (outside selected experimental settings), such as descriptions of teaching and learning processes, models of curriculum organization, or impacts on local communities.

This article is the first analysis we know of that offers systematic documentation of learning processes in multicultural educational among school-aged learners across a wide range of locations in Canada; it reports findings from a three-year naturalistic study of a nation-wide exchange program to foster multicultural, anti-racist leadership skills among high school students in various Canadian cities. Pursuing goals of evaluation research, we asked:

1. What and how do the students participating in this program learn?
2. Which program objectives do the students participating in the program report they have achieved?
3. What effects do parents of participating students and teachers indirectly associated with the program perceive the program to have produced two months after its completion?

## CONTEXT

Data for the purposes of program evaluation were gathered within programs organized by the Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada (SEVEC) from 1990 to 1993. This pilot program built on SEVEC's previous initiatives for the learning of English and French language and culture through exchange visits between Canadian Francophone and Anglophone students (e.g., as evaluated by McLean, Stern, Hanna, & Smith, 1978) as well as other, similar exchange programs between school-aged students within single school boards (e.g., as evaluated by Choldin, 1989; Megalokonomos, 1984) or internationally (e.g., as evaluated by Grove, 1984; Rose, 1989).

Publicity for SEVEC's *Multicultural, Anti-racist Leadership Exchange Program* indicated its aims were to help participants:

to develop intercultural/interracial leadership skills; to develop a deeper appreciation of Canada's mosaic through student and teacher interactions and cross-cultural sharing; to establish a framework of racial understanding; to identify some causes of prejudice; to develop the environmental conditions for ethnocultural and racial equality; to determine strategies and processes to effectively deal with prejudice and discrimination in the school and community environment; to encourage the accessing of the community's multicultural/anti-racist resources into the educational programs.

These goals conform generally to the type of broad-based strategy for multicultural education that McLeod (1992, p. 220) categorized as a *cultural/intercultural approach* or that Sleeter and Grant (1987) described as a *comprehensive approach* to multicultural education promoting cultural pluralism, social equity, and attention to ethnic differences. Two unique features of the SEVEC program, however, were that its exchanges were between schools across different regions of Canada and that it aimed to prepare student "leaders" to become capable of acting as catalysts in their schools to promote multicultural awareness and anti-racist actions after the exchanges were completed.

Our research proceeded in three phases, each of one year's duration, parallel to the organization of SEVEC's program into three annual sets of exchanges between different pairs of school boards. In each year SEVEC matched several groups of about 25 students and several of their teachers from one school board with a comparable group in another region of Canada. These paired groups met for an intensive, week-long exchange in each of their home schools. SEVEC provided teachers with several days of orientation before the program, then teachers and students in participating schools prepared unique curricula for their exchanges within a general framework specified by SEVEC. Students volunteering for the program were selected to conform to the distribution of visible and ethnic minorities in each local school setting. In the first year of the program

(1990/91), seven school boards in or around Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto, Victoria, and Winnipeg participated. In the second year (1991/92), participants included three of the same school boards from Ottawa and Victoria as well as four additional boards from Kitchener and Waterloo, Sydney (Nova Scotia), and Winnipeg. In the third year (1992/93), the same school boards from Kitchener and Waterloo, Ottawa, and Victoria continued and were joined by schools in Bracebridge and Igloolik.

The first two phases of evaluation research served mainly to describe the educational program in its initial phases and to provide formative recommendations to help improve specific aspects of the program. In the first year of the study (1991), we gathered participant-observation data at all the schools and conducted interviews with all participating teachers as well as some students and their parents. These data were used to prepare an inventory of the conditions under which the program operated, as well as narrative case studies of typical program activities (Mackay & Cumming, 1991). This observation period showed the program to consist in fairly unique activities in each site, organized by teachers as well as by student planning committees, typically as a week-long itinerary of scheduled events thematically linked to program goals, participants' interests and interpersonal dynamics, local resource people, sites, and situations. Six fundamental activity-types formed the curricula implemented in each exchange:

- *cooperative tasks* such as peer interviews, group simulations, interaction games, or role plays;
- *guest speakers or media presentations* such as lectures or panel presentations by community experts (e.g., counsellors, consultants, professors) or showing of films or videos on topics of racism or multiculturalism;
- *guided tours* of sites with local, cultural significance such as religious sites, museums or galleries, government buildings, or community service centres;
- *planning or evaluation sessions* to prepare or debrief participants for other activities or for students to organize specific events;
- *formal ceremonies* such as dinners, dances, or farewell presentations; and
- *performances* produced by students such as dramatic sketches or video-tapes.

In the second year of evaluation research, we used our observational data from the initial exchanges to prepare instruments for the research reported here. These instruments were pilot-tested in the second year of the study with 81 students participating in two sets of exchanges in four locations. The results were analyzed and reported to SEVEC (Cumming & Mackay, 1992), then the instruments were refined slightly for use in the third phase of evaluation research. This article reports results from the third phase (1992/93) of the evaluation research (see Cumming & McKay, 1993), which emphasized summative purposes: documenting learning processes and outcomes among student participants at the point

where the program had achieved a stable, consistent organization and several teachers had gained two years' prior experience with it.

#### INSTRUMENTS AND DATA COLLECTION

In 1991, we prepared three instruments for data collection, building on findings from participant-observation in the previous year, then had program organizers, participating teachers, and several university specialists in multicultural education review them for content and administrative feasibility:

- a log in which students could document the content and processes of their learning during the exchanges;
- a survey questionnaire to be administered prior to and after participation in the exchange program, asking students to rate their current knowledge or skills in regard to program objectives; and
- a survey checklist to be mailed, two months after the exchanges were finished, to parents of participating students as well as teachers in participating schools who themselves had not taken part in the exchange activities.

The learning log was a single sheet of paper asking students to describe up to nine things they *became aware of*, *gained new knowledge about*, or *became better prepared to take action on*. These three categories were suggested by participating teachers in the previous years' exchanges as different qualities of cognitive and social learning fostered by the program. The logs were administered twice weekly at each exchange site, then placed in sealed envelopes (without teachers reading them) and mailed to us researchers.

To prepare the instrument for pre- and post-program surveys, we asked teachers who had participated in the program the previous year to reformulate the program's stated goals into objectives accurately indicating their instructional intentions and practices, using pedagogically appropriate terms that would be comprehensible to their students. This activity produced 11 specific objectives, which we later transposed into 11 questions with descriptive rating scales for students to assess whether they possessed no (1), some (2), many or much (3) or very many skills or very much knowledge (4) for each program objective, with options for "I don't know" responses as well as brief written comments:

1. to develop leadership skills,
2. to clarify and use language on issues of race and culture,
3. to experience and hopefully to value another culture,
4. to foster a greater interest in other cultures and races,
5. to identify some causes of prejudice,
6. to identify barriers between people,
7. to become more aware of conditions in the school in order to increase equality among racial and ethnic groups,

8. to become more aware of one's own biases and prejudices,
9. to increase one's ability to deal effectively with prejudice and discrimination within the classroom and other school environments,
10. to raise one's willingness to apply leadership skills to community activities, and
11. to become more motivated to address issues involving prejudice and discrimination in the community.

For the data reported here, surveys were mailed to participating teachers in advance of the program, along with a protocol for administration to all students in the exchanges during the first day of the first week of each exchange (the *pre-program survey*) and then on the final day of the second week of the corresponding exchange (the *post-program survey*).

To obtain a broad perspective on the program's impact, we developed an instrument containing 12 items teachers or parents were to check off if they perceived them to have occurred as a direct result of students' participation in the SEVEC program. In addition, respondents were asked to comment briefly on their perceptions of these events as well as to add events not cited on the checklist but which they believed were associated with the program. We identified items for this checklist by interviewing parents, teachers, and students in the first and second years of the evaluation, documenting their impressions of distinct effects they thought the program had fostered in their schools and communities. These survey forms were mailed, two months after the completion of the exchanges, to all parents (or families) of students participating in four of the exchanges in 1992/93 as well as to all teachers in corresponding schools (i.e., teachers who had not themselves taken part in the SEVEC program). The survey was not mailed to individuals associated with the third exchange because the timing of its final exchange meant the survey would have coincided with their summer vacation. We sent all potential respondents return self-addressed envelopes with postage stamps attached.

#### ANALYSES

The learning logs produced open-ended, written data, which we analyzed using a constant-comparative methodology (Erickson, 1986), devising categories to represent the full content of these data while reducing them to specific, emergent themes. In the second year of the evaluation research, one researcher first read all the learning logs produced in the exchanges, then categorized their content into a preliminary set of themes. We tallied students' responses under each theme, combining themes that initially accounted for less than 10% of the data into other, appropriate thematic categories, which the two other researchers then reviewed and further refined.

This procedure resulted in two sets of coding categories. One set of five categories was linked to *topics* students frequently reported having learned about

during the exchanges, whereas the other set was linked to six *learning processes* students frequently reported having engaged in to construct their knowledge during the exchanges. After agreeing on the nature of these categories, we selected 10% of the learning logs (using a table of random numbers) to establish inter-coder reliability. For the *topics* of learning, we established an agreement level of 88%. Coding of the learning *processes*, however, proved more difficult because of students' vague or abbreviated wording in some instances, which made interpretation of the precise significance of these data difficult. Several efforts to code samples of the data, and to discuss problematic cases produced levels of agreement of only 75% between two coders but intra-coder reliability of 83% agreement. After establishing reliability for the coding scheme, one researcher coded all the learning logs, a set of nearly 3,000 items, coding each log twice—once for the topics students reported learning about, and once for their reported learning processes.

#### FINDINGS

According to data received, 120 students participated in the three exchanges in 1992/93: 48 in Exchange A, 50 in Exchange B, and 22 in Exchange C. (To preserve confidentiality, names of the schools or school boards are not identified here.) Students ranged from 14 to 20 years of age, though most were 15, 16, 17, or 18 years old. More females (72) participated than did males (37), whereas the previous year nearly twice as many males as females participated in the exchanges.

#### *Topics of Learning*

Students' reports of their learning included statements similar to those listed under the different topics that follow. Of the topic of racism, they said:<sup>2</sup>

- [I became aware of] racism in my town.
- [I gained new knowledge about] racism and how it affects different people.
- [I am now better prepared to take action by] not just walking away, but to stand up in the face of racism.

They reported learning about immigration problems:

- [I became aware of] how hard it is for immigrants to settle in Canada.
- [I gained new knowledge about] the feelings many other cultures may feel coming to a new country.
- [I am now better prepared to take action by] helping to organize activities and explain rules to new students who speak different languages.



about cultural and language differences:

- [I became aware of] how to write in different languages, such as Arabic.
- [I gained new knowledge about] other cultures and religions.
- [I am now better prepared to take action by] being more interested in my friends' backgrounds and languages they speak.

and about leadership skills:

- [I became aware of] you have to make your point clear enough that other people can understand your situation.
- [I gained new knowledge about] confidence that I didn't have before.
- [I am now better prepared to take action by] leading activities to express the things that multiculturalism represents and what we want our school to become.

They said they learned geographical and historical information:

- [I became aware of] Ontario, unlike Nova Scotia, is made up of a large array of cultures.
- [I gained new knowledge about] how mistreated Blacks were in the late 1800s and early 1900s.
- [I am better prepared to take action by] going back to the Longhouse and learning more about the Native cultures.

Table 1 presents the distribution of these topics for all three exchanges. Overall, the greatest proportions of the learning students reported concerned *geographical and historical information* (31.8% of coded statements in the logs) and *leadership skills* (32.4%). A secondary emphasis was learning about *racism and discrimination* (17.3%) as well as *cultural and language differences* (17.8%). In their 1992/93 logs, hardly any students reported learning about *immigration problems* (.6%), a category accounting for a distinct emphasis in one exchange the previous year.

Across the three sets of exchanges, students generally reported having learned about similar proportions of these topics. One distinct difference was that logs from Exchange A focused considerably more on *leadership skills* and less on *geographical and historical information*, whereas logs from Exchanges B and C focused more on *geographical and historical information* and less on *leadership skills*. This difference may indicate the emphasis of teaching and curriculum activities, teachers' prior experience with the program (varying from 2 years in Exchange A to none in Exchanges B and C), or the local conditions and priorities in each setting.

TABLE 1  
*Distribution of Student Learning by Topic*

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Exchange A</i>	<i>Exchange B</i>	<i>Exchange C</i>	<i>Overall</i>
Racism and discrimination	17.9%	18.7%	12.4%	17.3%
Immigration problems	1.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.6%
Cultural and language differences	20.6%	14.4%	15.3%	17.8%
Leadership skills	41.6%	21.7%	22.0%	32.4%
Geographical and historical information	18.8%	45.1%	50.2%	31.8%

### *Processes of Learning*

Students' reports of their learning facts or incidents appeared in statements like:

- [I became aware of] the population of Waterloo — 124,000.
- [I gained new knowledge about] the different songs and dances of the First Nations people.
- [I am now better prepared to take action by] rebutting racist comments with interesting facts and figures.

They described learning such concepts as:

- [I became aware of] getting even is not the only way to solve problems.
- [I gained new knowledge about] new definitions that were unaware to me, such as racism, multiculturalism, and anti-racist society.
- [I am now better prepared to take action by] knowing the steps that are needed to be an anti-racist person.

The learning logs contained many statements in which students said they acquired greater awareness of others:

- [I became aware of] what an immigrant's feelings, fears, and frustrations are.
- [I gained new knowledge about] how to live with a family of a different culture.
- [I am now better prepared to take action by] looking on the inside of a person rather than the outside.

Students reported their increased self-awareness:

- [I became aware of] how I talk and the language that I use.
- [I gained new knowledge about] my own feelings toward racism.
- [I am now better prepared to take action by] examining myself more closely for signs of racism or prejudice then doing something about it.

Comments about learning personal skills appeared:

- [I became aware of] how to handle name calling.
- [I gained new knowledge about] how to resolve certain situations calmly.
- [I am now better prepared to take action by] standing up for what I believe in.

Students said they improved their capacities for social organization:

- [I became aware of] new ways of overcoming prejudice and racism in my school.
- [I gained new knowledge about] how to begin a petition and its rules and regulations.
- [I am now better prepared to take action by] organizing more clubs in schools which do not have one and help them with our experience.

Overall, as Table 2 indicates, the processes of learning students reported most often in their logs involved learning specific *facts or incidents* (36.6% of all coded statements in the learning logs), developing their *personal skills* (29.9%), learning *concepts* (13.6%), and gaining greater *awareness of others* (14.1%). Very few students documented such learning processes as developing their *self-awareness* (3.0%) or *capacities for social organization* (2.8%), categories reported much more frequently among students in the previous year's exchanges. Across the three sets of exchanges, students in Exchange A reported having learned *concepts* and developing their *personal skills* to a greater extent than students in Exchanges B and C, who emphasized learning *facts or incidents*. The proportions of learning processes reported were, however, generally consistent across the three sets of exchanges, despite a high level of local control over curriculum organization.

#### *Pre-Program and Post-Program Surveys*

Table 3 reports group means, standard deviations, and results of sign tests for all students producing complete sets of pre- and post-program questionnaires rating their own knowledge and skills on 11 items linked to objectives of the SEVEC program. These results are remarkably similar to those reported for the 1991/92 exchanges for every item on the questionnaire (Cumming & Mackay, 1992), suggesting similarities in the participating student populations in both 1991/92 and 1992/93, as well as consistent trends in areas where the program may have discernible effects on students' senses of their own knowledge and skills.

TABLE 2

*Distribution of Student Engagement by Learning Processes*

<i>Learning Process</i>	<i>Exchange A</i>	<i>Exchange B</i>	<i>Exchange C</i>	<i>Overall</i>
Facts or incidents	22.3%	54.7%	49.5%	36.6%
Concepts	19.7%	5.9%	7.9%	13.6%
Awareness of others	16.5%	10.7%	12.8%	14.1%
Self-awareness	2.6%	3.7%	2.8%	3.0%
Personal skills	37.3%	19.6%	25.1%	29.9%
Capacities for social organization	1.6%	5.4%	1.9%	2.8%

## Students' Prior Knowledge and Skills

Students at the start of the program perceived themselves as possessing varying degrees of mastery of the knowledge and skills linked to SEVEC's program objectives. Overall, when they began the SEVEC program, students tended to state they had "many" skills or "much" knowledge linked to *valuing other cultures* ( $M=3.7$ ), *interest in other cultures and races* ( $M=3.3$ ), and *applying leadership to community activities* ( $M=3.3$ ). Conversely, at the start of the program students thought they had only "some" knowledge of or skills for *using language related to race and culture* ( $M=2.5$ ), *identifying barriers between people* ( $M=2.6$ ), *increasing equality in the school* ( $M=2.5$ ), and *awareness of their own biases and prejudices* ( $M=2.2$ ). These differences in initial self-assessments suggest that students participating in the exchanges generally had pre-existing interests in and advance preparation for this type of educational experience. But these students also tended to see their knowledge and skills as somewhat limited in certain areas, particularly in terminology, concepts, and self-awareness regarding multiculturalism, anti-racism, and equity in schools.

Students' ratings of their own skills and knowledge increased slightly between the beginning and end of the exchanges for all but 3 of the 11 program objectives. For 6 questionnaire items, students' responses indicated they thought they had acquired significantly greater knowledge and skills over the period of the exchanges, specifically for *interest in other cultures*, *leadership skills*, *using language related to race and culture*, *identifying causes of prejudice*, *identifying barriers between people*, and *awareness of their own biases and prejudices*. These 6 areas are mostly ones where students had rated their knowledge and skills as relatively low or moderate at the start of the SEVEC program. Sub-

TABLE 3

*Students' Pre-Program and Post-Program Ratings of Their Skills and Knowledge on Program Objectives*

<i>Program Objectives</i>	<i>Pre-Program</i>		<i>Post-Program</i>		<i>Sign test<sup>a</sup></i>
	M	SD	M	SD	
1. leadership skills	2.8	.9	3.1	.8	<i>p</i> =.007
2. using languages related to race and culture	2.5	.9	3.0	.6	<i>p</i> =.000
3. valuing another culture	3.7	.5	3.7	.5	n.s.
4. interest in other cultures and races	3.3	.8	3.7	.7	<i>p</i> =.045
5. identifying causes of prejudice	2.9	.8	3.2	.8	<i>p</i> =.000
6. identifying barriers between people	2.6	.9	3.0	.8	<i>p</i> =.000
7. increasing equality in school	2.5	1.1	2.6	1.1	n.s.
8. awareness of own biases and prejudices	2.2	1.0	2.6	1.0	<i>p</i> =.000
9. dealing with prejudice and discrimination	2.7	1.0	2.5	1.0	n.s.
10. applying leadership to community	3.3	.8	3.3	1.0	n.s.
11. addressing prejudice and discrimination in the community	3.0	1.0	3.1	1.1	n.s.

<sup>a</sup> significance of 2-tailed *p*.

analyses of these data revealed no differences between male and female students participating in the program, but response patterns differed somewhat with students' ages; 14- and 15-year-olds indicated more distinct changes in their responses to such survey items as *identifying barriers between people* or *using language related to race and culture* than either younger or older students did. This pattern warrants further investigation, given that it implies this type of education may have more or fewer benefits for students at different points in their lives.

Students also did not indicate changes in their capacities to act socially in terms of actions like *increasing equality in school*, *dealing with prejudice and discrimination*, *applying leadership to their communities*, *valuing another culture*, and *addressing prejudice and discrimination in the community*. In sum, students seemed to report that they had acquired distinct *personal* skills and knowledge during the exchange program but that they were still uncertain how to use these skills and knowledge for *social action* in their schools or communities.

*Impact Perceived by Parents and Other Teachers*

Of the 98 survey forms mailed to families of participating students and the 40 survey forms mailed to teachers at schools participating in exchanges A and B, we received only 42 completed checklists (10 additional forms were returned by Canada Post indicating their addresses were incorrect). The mail survey response rate was therefore 38%, a rate insufficiently high to rule out the possibility of biases in the responses received (e.g., perhaps only parents or teachers favourably disposed to the program completed the surveys).

Almost all respondents (92.9%) indicated that they thought the SEVEC program had resulted in *more knowledge of other cultures*. About half the respondents likewise indicated that the program had led to *increased awareness of anti-racist policies within the school and community* (59.5%); *the production of dramatic plays, newsletters, or literary works related to anti-racism* (54.8%); *more open relations between ethnic groups in the school* (54.8%); *the formation or enhancement of multicultural clubs* (52.4%); *improved communication with community groups* (50.0%); and *reduction of racism and other kinds of prejudice* (47.6%). Respondents also indicated that they perceived the program had led to *better communication with parents* (35.7%) and the *creation of anti-racist policies at the school* (23.8%). Only two respondents (4.8%) thought the program had led to *change in the school curriculum*.

Comments written on the survey forms mostly praised the program. Some parents pointed appreciatively toward changes they were able to discern:

- Many students grew closer as they understood and gained respect for the similarities and differences in each other's culture. Our sons have maintained contact with many of the exchange students from their twin province and with others on the exchange from this location.
- Our daughter was particularly drawn to the Indian culture in B.C. We wish that she could learn more about these wonderful people. She expressed her appreciation of the elders teaching their rites and rituals to the teenagers. . . . Our daughter's enlightenment will follow her the rest of her life. Thank you for a beautiful, enriching program, and a special thank you to the teachers for their dedication and enthusiasm.
- It was an excellent opportunity. We as a family felt non-racist until we did the program, then we realized it existed within us and we were totally unaware until the program called SEVEC showed us.

Similarly, teachers in the participating schools described distinct events arising from the program:

- Teachers are more aware of racism in the classrooms. They know how to address it—not ignore it.
- A 4 ft. by 6 ft. mural—"multiculturalism" depicting anti-racist and multicultural images—designed and created by the students. A multicultural fair also took place involving the community and about 350 students.

- We have become less tolerant of racist comments and jokes.
- Excellent to see trained students act as role models for their peers. The trained students were confident and consistent in their approach to younger students.

#### DISCUSSION

Our study documents the learning high school students reported during two weeks of multicultural, anti-racist education within the framework of an exchange program between schools in different regions of Canada. Data indicate that specific learning processes occurred in this context, although the validity of our analyses is limited to this one educational program, which consisted entirely of volunteer participants, without the experimental confirmation of control groups or randomly selected populations (neither of which would have been feasible for our research). As such, our analyses suggest curriculum processes that similar educational programs in Canada might expect to foster in exchanges among adolescent learners, rather than providing empirical evidence of predictable learning outcomes.

Analyses of students' logs indicated that they perceived their learning to centre primarily on four topics: racism and discrimination, cultural and language differences, leadership skills, and geographical and historical information. Learning about these topics appeared to occur mainly through four types of knowledge construction processes: acquiring facts or information about specific incidents or situations, learning new concepts, gaining awareness of others, and developing personal skills for leadership. Within a common program of studies, the distribution of these learning topics and processes appeared quite consistent across five locations in different regions of the country, suggesting that teachers and students in Canadian secondary schools approach multicultural, anti-racist education in fundamentally similar ways. Further research, however, is necessary to establish such similarities or bases for variation. Future studies should carefully consider differences, attending to such variables as teachers' experience with multicultural education, local priorities as well as demographic and cultural factors, ages of students and their existing knowledge and skills, and types of curriculum activities.

Our analyses of students' self-ratings on a survey instrument suggest they perceived their *personal* knowledge and skills linked to program objectives to increase significantly during program participation — particularly their developing leadership skills, clarifying and using language on issues of race and culture, identifying barriers between people, and identifying causes of prejudice. Comparable differences did not appear, however, for students' ratings of their knowledge and skills related to *social action* in their schools and communities. These self-reported findings conform closely to our impressions (from on-site observations in the program's initial years) of topics and processes emphasized by teachers' and students' activities. Moreover, data from learning logs similarly

indicate that students found their activities during the exchanges greatly emphasized cognitive or personal kinds of knowledge and skills. Results of mail surveys to parents and teachers indirectly associated with the program also suggest that the program's main effect was to increase students' personal awareness and individual capacities. These mail surveys, however, also pointed out various other effects these multicultural exchanges fostered in schools, families, and communities over the longer term.

Several interpretations of these survey results are possible. First, the results of pre- and post-program surveys may be linked to information directly available to students to rate with confidence their knowledge and skills at the time of completing the exchanges as well as "halo effects" from these immediate experiences: A sense of one's own personal skills and knowledge can be answered with some confidence directly, whereas a sense of increased preparedness to act more effectively may require time and appropriate opportunities to materialize. In support of this interpretation, parents' and teachers' responses to the mail survey did point toward an array of specific, socially oriented effects in schools and students' lives that they had observed two months after the exchanges were completed. Second, it may be that the socially oriented variables over which the SEVEC program and students themselves have direct control were quite limited (as described in Mackay & Cumming, 1991), making action in the school and local community a primary, long-term responsibility of schools themselves and of people within and around them, rather than of an exchange program organized externally. A third possibility is that the 11 objectives teachers set for these exchanges were too numerous to accomplish in two weeks, suggesting that future exchange programs might emphasize fewer learning objectives, or that the duration of such exchanges should be lengthened.

Future research is required to verify our findings, systematically investigate other forms of multicultural education, and assess the long-term effects of leadership training in multicultural awareness and anti-racist policies within particular Canadian schools and communities. Our analyses describe how individual students reported their learning to have occurred *within* a specific educational program, but such learning must be considered more extensively for its impacts on the broader school environment, students' families, and local communities. For this reason, one important direction for future studies is longitudinal documentation of qualities of change within single schools and communities in response to new policies and practices in multicultural education, accounting in detail for local contextual factors and processes. A comparative perspective, such as ours, appears vital to identifying common trends and local differences across schools and geographical settings. The long-term, grounded approach adopted here also appears fundamental to evaluation research being able to understand new initiatives in multicultural education in terms that meet and interact with the intentions and interests of particular teachers, program organizers, students, and



families. Further attention, moreover, needs to be given to many ambiguous aspects of multicultural education (e.g., people's differing interpretations of key concepts, qualities of individual experience, and intergroup processes of resistance or accommodation) not included in our summative focus on specific dimensions of the SEVEC program, but which were obvious to us during our initial period of participant-observation.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Portions of this research were presented at meetings of the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation, 17 October 1992, Edmonton, Alberta; the Association for Moral Education, 12 November 1992, Toronto; and the Canadian Council for Multicultural and Intercultural Education, 27 November 1993, Vancouver. We thank Selina Mushi, Lawrence Myles, Shelley Taylor, Patti Trussler, and Dianne Wood for assistance in data collection and analyses at various points; Robert Harrison, Valerie Dean and other SEVEC staff for their support in facilitating this evaluation research; *Canadian Journal of Education* reviewers for helpful comments on earlier versions of the manuscript; and the teachers, students, and families of students across the country who enthusiastically participated in the exchange program and reported on their experiences and learning processes.
- <sup>2</sup> Phrases in square brackets correspond to prompts appearing in the learning log format. The statements presented here appeared in students' logs from the 1991/92 exchanges, following our initial analyses and uses of these particular statements as exemplars for analyses of data from 1992/93.

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